(a) whether calls between Delhi and Mumbai have become local, w.e.f. 1st June, 2006;

(b) if so, the amount of increase *per mensem* in MTNL income on account of that;

(c) whether in view of success of this scheme Government propose to introduce this scheme in other Metropolis as well;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, the calls from Delhi MTNL landline to Mumbai MTNL landline and *vice versa* is being charged at the local rate of Rs. 1.20 per 3 minutes with effect from 1st June, 2006.

(b) It is too early to assess the increase in income of MTNL *per mensem* on account of this scheme. However, traffic between Delhi and Mumbai has increased considerably after introduction of the scheme on 1st June, 2006.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no such proposal in BSNL to introduce this scheme in other Metropolis which falls under its licensed area of operation.

(e) BSNL is a Pan-India operator, offering services in both urban as well as rural areas and offers uniform tariff to all subscribers in accordance with Interconnect User Charges (IUC) regulation prescribed by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) from time to time. Tariff based on specific destination especially for metropolitan cities is difficult to implement.

Telecom network in Orissa

2892. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI SURENDRA LATH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of revenue villages in the country that are connected with the telecom network especially in Orissa;

(b) the steps Government are taking to improve the tele-density of rural areas in different States especially in Orissa;

(c) whether there is any time frame to complete all villages of Orissa as telecom network connected village; and

(d) if so, the targeted period therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) As on 30-6-2006, 5,46,506 villages in the country have been provided with Village Public Telephones (VPTs). There are 40,753 VPTs in Orissa.

(b) Various steps have been taken for improving rural tele-density in the country including Orissa *inter alia:*

(i) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has signed an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Reliance Infocom Ltd. (RIL), Tata Teleservices Ltd. (TTL) and Tata Teleservices Ltd. (Maharashtra) (TTL-MH) for provision of individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country. This includes 96 SDCAs in Orissa out of total 120 SDCAs in the State.

(ii) BSNL has planned to deploy large scale Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network in rural areas of the country including Orissa. BSNL has installed at least one Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) Basic Transceiver Station (BTS) in 102 SDCAs out of total number of 120 SDCAs in Orissa as on 30-06-2006.

(iii) BSNL has planned to expand its mobile services upto Block Headquarters and villages having population more than 5,000 by end of 2006. As on 30-06-2006, 203 Block Headquarters out of total number of 314 Block Headquarters have been covered by mobile services in Orissa.

(iv) BSNL has floated a tender for expansion of its mobile network by 63 million lines. A significant portion of these additional lines will go to the rural areas of the country including that of Orissa.

(c) USOF has entered into an agreement with BSNL in November, 2004 for provision of VPTs using Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPTs) in 4,899 unconnected eligible villages in Orissa. This excludes villages having less than 100 population and lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc.

(d) These villages will be provided VPTs by November, 2007.